

Table 7.1

MAESTRO: A LISTENER'S GUIDE

What follows is a chronological guide to the musical selections in *Maestro* and remarks about how they are used in the film. Unless noted otherwise, all the tracks contain music composed by Bernstein.

A Quiet Place: Postlude (1983), Track 17 (2:00)

The setting of this provocative piano transcription of the Postlude from Bernstein's little-known opera *A Quiet Place* is the family home in Connecticut known as the Fairfield House at the beginning of *Maestro* in 1989, 1 year before Bernstein's death, 11 years after the death of his wife, Felicia Montealegre. The first words in the film, addressed to a silent interviewer, come from LB who states his view that the opera "was always better on the piano, I don't know why" (Screenplay, 1). At the end of the scene Lenny tells the interviewer, "I miss her [Felicia] terribly," after which the screen flashes back 46 years and color turns to black and white for the next 45 minutes. For more discussion on the choice of this excerpt, the reader is referred to the main text of chapter 7.

The Phone Call (9:30 a.m., November 14, 1943 (Track 1) (app. 54 seconds)

The camera reveals Bernstein in bed with another naked man, whom viewers will learn in the next scene is David Oppenheim. The phone rings and in a one-way conversation with the symphony manager Bruno Zirato, Bernstein receives the historic summons to conduct the New York Philharmonic that afternoon.

Symphonic Suite from *On the Waterfront* (1954) (Track 1 continued) (app. 70 seconds) After the call, LB throws open the drapes of his apartment, "jumps from the window sill onto the naked man, drums his buttocks and rolls off" (Screenplay, 2). Bernstein's drumming cleverly leads directly to the drumbeat from the beginning of the *Presto barbaro* section of the Symphonic Suite from *On the Waterfront* based on the film score that Bernstein composed 11 years later. The connection between this vigorous recurring theme and the film does not stem from the music itself but instead corresponds to LB's almost violently exuberant mood upon hearing the news about his big professional break. After about 51 seconds, the *Waterfront* music changes from foreground to underscoring as LB is announced over Carnegie Hall's Public Address.

Schumann: *Manfred* Overture, Op. 115 (1848-49) (Track 1 continued) (57 seconds)

The announcer continues for another 37 seconds as LB goes to the podium and gives the downbeat to Schumann's *Manfred* Overture. After another few uninterrupted seconds, the overture continues for another minute as underscoring while Zirato praises Bernstein's conducting prowess.

Fancy Free: Variation I (Galop) (1944), (Track 1 concluded) (40 seconds) (5:18 total)

Next heard is a conversation between LB and Robbins, with interjections by David who is now wearing a suit, about the new ballet *Fancy Free* scheduled to premiere the following April. The continuous soundtrack launched by a historic phone call concludes without a pause to the last 40

seconds of “Galop” from the ballet (a few days later in the film), with LB and Copland recording the excerpt for piano four hands before they send it to Robbins to choreograph. As with many important historical figures in LB’s orbit in *Maestro*, Copland will remain unidentified and his importance to LB left unexplained (Screenplay 1-7). End of Track 1 (5:18)

***On the Town*: “Lonely Town” Pas de deux (1944), Track 2 (2:23)**

LB is giving the bath-robed David a sensuous foot massage. This is the cue for a generous and appropriate excerpt that encompasses and underscores most of this romantic scene. LB interrupts the massage long enough to attach a note to the recording of the “Lonely Town” Pas de deux from *On the Town* he made with Copland, this time on two pianos. The note concludes with LB telling his choreographer, “I’ll leave it to you to figure out, Mr. Robbins, how to dance to this type of music” (Screenplay, 8).

When *On the Town* arrived on Broadway in December 1944, the dancing partners are a “lone girl” and a sailor, part of the unpublished scenario that presents an erotic depiction of “honest lust.” Even without this context, the dance, which features two clarinets, bass clarinet, and a solo trumpet (orchestrated by Hershey Kay), is a highlight of *On the Town* and Bernstein’s musical theater output as a whole. For those who have seen the movie version but not the show, the Pas de deux will be unfamiliar since it was one of the many numbers deleted from the latter. Just before the scene ends in *Maestro*, the camera shifts to introduce Felicia as LB and David part with the words “love you” (Screenplay, 7-9).

***On the Town*: “Carried Away” (1944), Track 3 (98 seconds)**

Moments later in film time but 2 years later in historical time (February 5, 1946), Felicia arrives at the home of her piano teacher from her native Chile, the acclaimed virtuoso Claudio Arrau. A party is in progress and a man and woman are performing “Carried Away” from *On the Town*. Comden and Green, who performed this song in the popular stage musical which only recently closed, are singing to the piano accompaniment of their friend Lenny, whose back is turned away from the camera. Following this 45-second song snippet, the soundtrack offers dialogue (53 seconds) in which Shirley introduces Felicia and Lenny who is now clearly visible as Lenny (Screenplay, 9).

“You’ve Got That Look” (1939) (Track 3 concluded) (2:39) (3:38 total)

After Lenny describes Felicia’s name Montealegre-Cohn as “an interesting marriage of words,” the camera immediately shifts to Comden singing “You’ve Got That Look,” a song with lyrics by Frank Loesser and music by Frederick Hollander, originally introduced in 1939 by Marlene Dietrich in the movie *Destry Rides Again* (Screenplay, 11).

Prelude from *Trouble in Tahiti* (1952), Track 4 (0:32)

The next 3 musical cues consist of brief excerpts that accompany screen activity. These cues and most future excerpts share the following characteristics: 1) they are under 2 minutes each, and sometimes, like the *Trouble in Tahiti* fragment, as short as 30 seconds; 2) they convey a mood that matches something shown on the screen, although the choice of excerpt bears no discernible connection to the screen action; 3) the brief excerpts display the variety of Bernstein’s musical range and cry out for more. During the 32 seconds excerpted from near the opening of *Trouble in Tahiti* (a work composed 6 years later), with its jazzy vocal trio, viewers see Felicia and Lenny leaving the party at the Arrau’s, running to catch a bus, then walking to the Provincetown

Playhouse where they will read a scene from García Lorca's *When Five Years Pass*, a production Felicia is understudying (Screenplay, 13-15).

“Paris Waltz” from *Candide* (1956), Track 5 (0:53)

The music to the “Paris Waltz” from *Candide* sounds as Felicia basks in the glow of an ovation following her well-received performance at the Provincetown Playhouse in *When Five Years Pass*. According to the screenplay, at this precise moment LB is “absorbing the adulation of the even larger full house [Carnegie Hall], an immense and ecstatic crowd.” During the Lorca ovation a man comes up to the stage and gives Felicia some flowers. In the dressing room after the show, Shirley introduces this man to Felicia as the actor Richard Hart, who will soon become her lover while she waits for Lenny to reconsider their engagement.

The screenplay departs from the historical chronology here since the performance of the Lorca play took place in April 1945, months before Felicia met Lenny and even longer before she met Hart. Based on the reference in the dressing room to Hart's new play with Eva Gabor (most likely *The Happy Time*), the performance took place in 1950, 6 years before LB composed *Candide* (Screenplay, 20-21).

***Facsimile* (Molto adagio) (1946), Track 6 (1:12)**

The first minute of LB's second ballet with Robbins underscores a transition from an outdoor conversation between LB and Felicia at Tanglewood during their courtship in 1946 to an indoor conversation in their Tanglewood bedroom. Unlike many musical choices in *Maestro*, the beautiful *Facsimile* excerpt matches the year with the scene (Screenplay, 24).

***Fancy Free*: I. Enter Three Sailors and VI. Three Dance Variations, Variation III (Danzon) / *On the Town*: Opening: “New York, New York” (1944), Track 7 (3:34)**

Enter 3 sailors in *Fancy Free* (0:00-1:03) after which Felicia watches the Danzon from the same ballet (1:04-2:38) that curiously features LB himself as a dancing sailor. LB moves toward Felicia and kisses her as “we hear the horn wail that marks the beginning of *On the Town*: ‘New York, New York’” (2:34-3:34). The recording features Bernstein conducting the New York Philharmonic (Screenplay, 28-29).¹

***Anniversaries for Orchestra*: X. For Felicia Montealegre (1948) / Interview with Edward R. Murrow (Dialogue) (1955) / *Songfest*: Three Solos, IV. “To What You Said” (1977) Track 8 (6:07)**

The music of the piano anniversary “For Felicia Montealegre” in an arrangement for orchestra by Garth Edwin Sunderland underscores the dramatic moment in 1946 when Felicia makes the leap of faith into their future by suggesting to “give it a whirl” (0:00-0:58).² As the music continues, the scene shifts nine years ahead with a generous excerpt from LB and Felicia's television appearance on Edward R. Murrow's popular television program *Person to Person* (September 23, 1955) (0:59-4:17), some of which transferred to *Maestro* verbatim. The music then fades into “To What You Said” from *Songfest* (4:18-6:07) taking viewers to a family scene in the

¹ The cue also contains the dialogue on pages 28-29.

² The set of 11 orchestrated anniversaries premiered on April 13, 2018 with the Kansas City Symphony, Michael Stern, conductor. As stated earlier, the source of Felicia's “Let's give it a whirl” is located in L. Bernstein (2013), 294.

Bernstein's Osborne apartment where LB is catching a paper airplane tossed by their first child Jamie (Screenplay, 35-40).

Armstrong, "St. Louis Blues" (1956) / Mahler: Symphony No. 5 (Adagietto) (1902) Track 9 (3:50)

Following a conversation between Felicia and Shirley, the music cuts to a 1956 performance in which Louis Armstrong is playing W. C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues" with the Lewisohn Stadium Symphony conducted by LB (0:00-0:57). The music then leaps without pause to the early measures of the Adagietto movement from Mahler's Symphony No. 5 with an underscored montage that takes viewers to a playful scene in which LB, Felicia, and Jamie and a friend are playing at their Fairfield home in Connecticut. Baby Alexander and Copland also appear.

The music continues at an unidentified Concert Hall, both backstage and onstage. The scene eventually closes with a "deep kiss" backstage between LB and Felicia after which Felicia watches her husband basking in the applause. This is the final scene in black and white before the color portion of *Maestro* moves forward thirteen years later. The Mahler recording features Bernstein conducting the New York Philharmonic (Screenplay, 43-45).

***Candide*, "Make Our Garden Grow" (1956) Track 10 (2:09)**

At a rehearsal of the 1973 revival of *Candide* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, LB conducts the poignant and uplifting choral finale of his 1956 operetta with piano accompaniment. Aside from his playing of *A Quiet Place* to open the film, this is the only uninterrupted excerpt from a work of Bernstein. It is also a diegetic performance (a rehearsal) rather than musical underscoring (Screenplay, 56-57).

***West Side Story*, Prologue (1957) Track 11 (1:24)**

The "hate motive" that opens the Prologue to *West Side Story* launches a brief excerpt from LB's most famous work and provides transition music from the *Candide* rehearsal (in part supervised by Tommy) to the front yard of the Fairfield House where Jamie, now 20, is "sitting on a tree swing, head down, slightly melancholic," shortly before her dramatic confrontation with her father concerning rumors of his homosexuality (Screenplay, 58).

***Mass*: XVII. Pax: Communion ("Secret Songs") (1971) Track 12 (7: 23)**

The music cue begins with LB at the piano creating the opening phrases of "Secret Songs," the concluding number of his *Mass*. His work is nearly done. Bernstein's piano is gradually replaced by a boy soprano followed by strings and eventually a full chorus and orchestra. Coinciding with the *Mass* finale is an extended film montage in which the music underscores a transition from the Fairfield House to the opening night performance where Felicia observes Tommy squeezing LB's hand. When the music stops, Felicia says something that's "not friendly" to her husband before leaving the Kennedy Center.

In contrast to other tracks, the soundtrack and the film differ here in that the soundtrack is uninterrupted by film dialogue whereas in the film LB announces to his family that he has completed his *Mass* and Felicia responds by jumping into the family pool fully clothed (Screenplay, 67-69). There is no record of such an announcement by LB in connection with the *Mass*, but Jack Gottlieb recalls that when LB announced the completion of his "Kaddish"

symphony to his family 8 years earlier Felicia jumped into the pool with her clothes on that occasion.³

Walton: *Façade*, Sir Beelzebub (1921) Track 13 (0:32)

This snippet is a reenactment of an event that took place at the Camera Three television studio on April 3, 1977, in which Felicia and Mendy Wager performed Walton's *Façade*. As noted earlier, on March 15, a few weeks prior to the studio broadcast, they had performed the work at a benefit for the Chamber Music Society at Lincoln Center with LB conducting (Screenplay, 77).

Mahler: Symphony No. 2 ("Resurrection"), V. Finale (1894) Track 14 (6:16)

Both the film and the CD contain the final 6 minutes of the finale to Mahler's Symphony No. 2, a reenactment of a live performance that took place in early September 1973 at Ely Cathedral in Cambridgeshire, England and recorded on film. In the *Maestro* film and soundtrack, instead of LB conducting the London Symphony orchestra with the original soloists Sheila Armstrong (soprano) and Janet Baker (mezzo), the excerpt was newly-filmed and recorded at the cathedral with Cooper conducting the LSO with Rosa Feola and Isabel Leonard as soloists, 180 chorus members, and 76 orchestral players.

At 6:16 minutes, the Ely performance is the longest uninterrupted musical excerpt in *Maestro*. The performance is observed by Felicia, whose presence is a welcome surprise to LB. Following their heated argument she realizes that her husband still loves her and tells him she now thinks "there's no hate in your heart." In the next scene Felicia and Lenny together learn in the doctor's office that she has cancer (Screenplay, 86-87).

Symphony No. 2 ("The Age of Anxiety"), Prologue (1949) Track 15 (0:58)

After leaving the doctor's office, Felicia and LB sit down in Central Park. As Felicia lights a cigarette, the film cues the opening minute of the symphony titled "The Age of Anxiety," which consists solely of a duet for 2 clarinets. In a repetition of the game they played during their courtship 30 years earlier, LB asks Felicia to think of a number. LB's choice of the number two relates both to their situation ("Like us, a pair" and like "two little ducks in a pond") and the pair of clarinets. The recording features Bernstein conducting the New York Philharmonic (Screenplay, 92).

Chase: "The Clapping Song (Clap Pat Clap Slap)," vocals by Shirley Ellis (Track 16) (1:13)

The Bernstein clan in their East Hampton House on Long Island play this recording of a song they used to sing and dance to when the children were young. It's "The Clapping Song," composed by Lincoln Chase, a huge hit in the 1965 recording by Shirley Ellis heard in the film and soundtrack. Near the end of the song "the family comes in for a group hug, enveloping Felicia with love" (Screenplay, 98-100).

Reprise: *A Quiet Place*: Postlude (1983), Track 17 (2:00)

"As at the open[ing], we hear the piano beginning of the Postlude from *A Quiet Place* and we dissolve to"—"EXT. SEA WALL, EAST HAMPTON HOUSE, LONG ISLAND, NY—DAY." The music contained in Track 17 is identical to the music that opens *Maestro*, but instead of

³ "In the summer of 1963, when LB announced, 'I finished' (i.e., composing 'Kaddish'), Felicia got up from her chair by the pool and with a joyous whoop jumped in fully clothed." Gottlieb (2010), 123.

showing LB playing the piano as in the film's opening, the piano music is now coming from inside Bernstein's head as he looks toward the sea wall (Screenplay, 101).

Beethoven: Symphony No. 8 in F Major (1812), Track 18 (3:02)

This track contains nearly the entire film scene at Tanglewood in 1989. LB is coaching a young Black student named William on how to conduct a passage from the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 8 in F Major from measure 311 to shortly after the tricky fermata at measure 332. The main technical issues are how to arrive at the fermata and, still more challenging, how to move beyond it. In the process of helping William resolve these issues, the Maestro places his hand around William's shoulder.

William quickly decides that he wants a *ritardando* (a gradual slowing down) as he moves toward the fermata. He takes longer deciding what to do next but eventually figures things out, albeit tentatively, and LB asks Williams's fellow students to "be kind to him." The audio track ends here, but in the film, viewers see William trying to negotiate the fermata one more time as his beat arrives simultaneously with "the beat of the electronic bass opening 'Shout by Tears for Fears.'" The film shifts without pause to a "wild party" where LB dances suggestively with his young protégé prior to a presumed sexual conquest (Screenplay, 101-05).

Chichester Psalms, II. Psalm 23 (1965), Track 19 (4:59)

A black and white flashback to Fairfield House in 1955 where the screenplay indicates that "Felicia, young, full of life, looks directly at us" (Screenplay, 105). As she turns away and then disappears, viewers hear the soundtrack of the second movement of *Chichester Psalms* (with a few small cuts). Like many other musical selections, the movement was presumably chosen more for the mood it sets than for any specific connection with the plot narrative. As the music continues without Felicia's presence, the word "Maestro" appears on the screen followed by the end credits as the music continues.

Chichester's second psalm (Psalm 23), most of which is taken up by the credits, is the longest continuous uninterrupted Bernstein excerpt in the film. As the credits continue to roll, viewers see a clip of the historic Bernstein conducting, albeit not to the music of Psalm 23 that is heard on the soundtrack but to an unknown composition. From the author's viewing experience watching the movie on Netflix, at this point the credits come to a sudden full stop (Screenplay, 105).

Candide: Overture (1956), Track 20 (4:36)

And so, after a few seconds does the music of the overture to *Candide*, although unlike most the CD tracks the entire overture, Bernstein's most popular orchestral work, was recorded. The screen then fades to black. Although not identified in the track listing, the overture and the following excerpt from the "Kaddish" symphony are identified elsewhere on the CD notes, which clarify that the performances are by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Nézet-Séguin (Screenplay, 105).

Symphony No. 3 ("Kaddish"), II. Din Torah (1963), Track 21 (0:56)

A final track on the CD offers a musical lagniappe, a gorgeous excerpt from the "Din Torah" movement of the Symphony No. 3 ("Kaddish"). If any minute could be chosen to reveal Bernstein's extraordinary lyricism, especially in a symphony where lyricism seldom emerges, it would be this minute selected for the *Maestro* soundtrack.